

## Message Text

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-----080053 230146Z /14  
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TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

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TAGS: CVIS, PINT, UR, US

SUBJECT: MONITOR, NEWSWEEK STORY ON PENTECOSTALISTS

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF STORY BY DAVID WILLIS WHICH  
APPEARED IN "CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR" OF AUGUST 21:
2. "NEW US DILEMMA; SOVIET-CHRISTIAN SIT-INS"  
EMBASSY WOULD HELP, BUT OTHERS MAY COME
3. "FOR TWO MONTHS NOW, SEVEN MEMBERS OF TWO DEEPLY  
RELIGIOUS RUSSIAN CHRISTIAN FAMILIES HAVE DEFIED SOVIET  
POLICE, CHALLENGED AND EMBARRASSED THE US GOVERNMENT, AND  
APPEALED TO AMERICAN CHRISTIANS BY DOGGEDLY CAMPING OUT IN  
A PUBLIC WAITING ROOM IN THE US EMBASSY IN MOSCOW.
4. "THEY RUSHED INTO THE EMBASSY, PAST THE POLICE GUARDS  
ALWAYS ON DUTY OUTSIDE, JUNE 27. IT WAS THE LATEST CHAPTER  
IN A 15-YEAR SAGA AIMED AT FLEEING RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION

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AND EMIGRATING TO THE UNITED STATES.

5. "MEMBERS OF ONE OF THE FAMILIES -- BOTH PENTACOSTAL  
(SIC) EVANGELICALS -- HAD GAINED ENTRY TO THE EMBASSY FOUR  
PREVIOUS TIMES SINCE 1963.
6. "NOW, LIVING OUT OF OVERNIGHT BAGS, GIVING UP THEIR

CHAIRS AND COUCH IF THE WAITING ROOM IS CROWDED DURING BUSINESS HOURS, PRAYING, WAITING AND HOPING, THEY POLITELY BUT FIRMLY REFUSE TO LEAVE.

7. "FIRST THEY SAY, THEY MUST BE TOLD THEY CAN EMIGRATE -- AND THAT THEY WON'T BE PUNISHED FOR COMING IN BY BEING BEATEN OR COMMITTED TO PSYCHIATRIC WARDS BY SOVIET AUTHORITIES.

8. "THE EMBASSY WANTS TO HELP THEM. BUT IT ALSO WANTS THEM OUT BEFORE THEIR DRAMATIC CASE ENCOURAGES OTHER DISSIDENTS TO POUR INTO US EMBASSIES THROUGHOUT EASTERN EUROPE. OTHER AMERICAN EMBASSIES IN THE AREA, INCLUDING ONE IN BUCHAREST, ARE URGING THAT THE FAMILIES BE PERSUADED TO LEAVE. THE EMBASSY IN BUCHAREST HAS HAD SEVERAL INSTANCES OF DESPERATE ROMANIANS STAGING INCIDENTS THERE IN RECENT MONTHS.

9. "ON COMPASSIONATE GROUNDS THE EMBASSY HERE WON'T FORCE THE TWO FAMILIES TO LEAVE. STAFFERS, MOVED BY THEIR COURAGE AND THEIR PLIGHT, SIGN UP TO BRING IN FOOD EACH EVENING (AND SOMETHING FOR BREAKFAST THE NEXT DAY). THE CURRENT LIST EVEN HAS THE NAME OF THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE WRITTEN IN AGAINST ONE DATE.

10. "BUT THE EMBASSY TREADS A FINE LINE. THE FAMILIES ARE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FED AND USE A PUBLIC RESTROOM AND ARE ALLOWED TO EXERCISE IN THE EMBASSY YARD UNDER SUPERVISION ABOUT ONCE A WEEK. 'BUT WE CAN'T GIVE THE IMPRESSION IT'S LIKE A COUNTRY CLUB FOR THEM,' SAYS ONE SOURCE.

11. "SO NO PRESS PHOTOS ARE ALLOWED. EMBASSY STAFFERS ARE NOW TOLD NOT TO ENCOURAGE THEM WITH CHERRY WORDS. AND THEY ARE REGULARLY ASKED TO LEAVE. THEY HAVE BEEN PERMITTED TWO SHOWERS AT THIS WRITING.

12. "THEIR PRESENCE HAS TIGHTENED ALREADY-TAUT RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES ANOTHER NOTCH OR TWO. POLICE GUARDS ARE EVEN MORE VIGILANT, SOURCES REPORT. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY REFUSES TO GIVE ANY PROMISES OR ASSURANCES: 'IT'S YOUR PROBLEM,' OFFICIALS THERE SAY.

13. "AND THE FAMILIES ALSO IN EFFECT CHALLENGE AMERICAN CHRISTIANS, SOME HERE BELIEVE: CAN THEY RALLY AND LOBBY AS EFFECTIVELY FOR THEIR FELLOW BELIEVERS HERE AS JEWS HAVE DONE?

14. "CENTRAL FIGURE IN THE DRAMA IS PYOTR (PETER)

VASHCHENKO, A SOMBER, HOLLOW-CHEEKED, EXTREMELY DEVOUT

FATHER OF 13 CHILDREN FROM CHERNOGORSK NEAR NOVOSIBIRSK  
IN CENTRAL SIBERIA.

15. "HIS STORY OF DECADES OF RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION IS  
GENERALLY SUPPORTED BY AMERICAN OFFICIALS WHO HAVE SEEN  
THE DOCUMENTS IN HIS POSSESSION. SOME OF HIS CHILDREN  
HAVE BEEN REMOVED FROM HIS HOME AND SENT TO DISTANT  
SCHOOLS BECAUSE HE WAS TEACHING THEM THE SCRIPTURES. HE  
WAS HARASSED FOR WANTING TO CALL ONE SON BY A BIBLICAL  
NAME IAKOV, OR JACOB.

16. "HE AND THOUSANDS OF OTHER PENTACOSTALS WHO REFUSE TO  
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REGISTER WITH THE STATE (THEY SAY THIS WOULD DISHONOR  
GOD'S LAW) ARE FINED IF THEY HOLD SERVICES ON SUNDAY.  
FIFTY RUBLES (75 DOLLARS) IS LEVIED AGAINST THE ORGANIZER  
AND HALF THAT SUM ON THE OCCUPANT OF THE HOME, THEY REPORT.

17. "BRITISH EXPERTS AT THE CENTER FOR RELIGION AND COM-  
MUNIST STUDIES IN KENT ESTIMATE THAT 16,000 OF  
THEIR COLLEAGUES HAVE APPLIED TO EMIGRATE ON THE BASIS  
OF VALID INVITATIONS FROM COBELIEVERS. WESTERN EXPERTS  
IN MOSCOW ESTIMATE THAT, ALL TOLD, SOME HALF-MILLION  
PENTACOSTALS IN THE SOVIET UNION WANT TO EMIGRATE TO  
PRACTICE THEIR RELIGION FREELY.

18. "THE VASHCHENKOS POSSESS A SIGNED AND NOTARIZED  
INVITATION FROM SELMA, ALABAMA, WHICH THEY SHOWED THIS  
CORRESPONDENT. IT IS FROM A MAN THEY SAY THEY MET IN THE  
EMBASSY IN JUNE 1962, WHEN HE WAS A CONSULAR OFFICER  
THERE.

19. "BUT SINCE LAST YEAR THE AUTHORITIES SAY THEY WILL  
ACCEPT ONLY INVITATIONS FROM RELATIVES ABROAD.

20. "THIS IS DESPITE PREVIOUS PERMISSION FOR SOME PENTA-  
COSTALS TO LEAVE FOR ISRAEL (WHERE THEY DID NOT WANT TO GO)  
AND A HANDFUL TO THE US.

21. "PYOTR VASHCHENKO WILL STAY IN THE EMBASSY 'ALL MY  
LIFE IF NECESSARY', HE SAYS IN AN INTERVIEW. HE CAME IN  
ONLY TO SPEAK TO OFFICIALS, BUT POLICE SEIZED HIS 16-  
YEAR-OLD SON IOAN (JOHN) EN ROUTE. MR. VASHCHENKO SAYS  
HE WOULD NOT LEAVE UNTIL HE HAD NEWS OF THE SON. AFTER  
TWO WEEKS HIS FAMILY TELEPHONED TO SAY HE HAD BEEN BEATEN  
AND TORTURED.

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22. "IF THEY DO THAT TO SOMEONE UNDER 18,' SAID DAUGHTER LIUBOV, 'THINK WHAT THEY WILL DO TO US.'

23. "MR. VASHCHENKO SAYS HE WAS COMMITTED TO A PSYCHIATRIC WARD FOR ALMOST TWO MONTHS WHEN HE LEFT THE EMBASSY IN 1968.

24. "HIS WIFE, AUGUSTINA, IS WITH HIM, PLUMP AND CHEERFUL IN GREEN SLIPPERS. TWO OTHER DAUGHTERS ARE LIDIYA AND LILIA. ALL THREE DAUGHTERS ARE IN THEIR 20'S."

25. FOLLOWING NON-BYLINE STORY CONCERNING EMBASSY SIT-INS APPEARS IN AUGUST 28 EDITION OF NEWSWEEK: SOVIET UNION: SANCTUARY

26. "BY DAY, THEY SIT THUMBING THROUGH MAIL-ORDER CATALOGS OR PIECING TOGETHER JIGSAW PUZZLES, LOST IN THE SWARM OF BUSINESS AT THE U.S. EMBASSY IN MOSCOW. BUT AT 6 P.M. THE SQUATTERS BECOME CONSPICUOUS. ONCE THE EMBASSY'S SMALL LOBBY HAS EMPTIED, THE SEVEN DEVOUT PENTECOSTALS DROP TO THEIR KNEES IN PRAYER.

FOR NEARLY TWO MONTHS, THEY HAVE USED THE LOBBY AS A SANCTUARY ON A PERILOUS JOURNEY BETWEEN THEIR SIBERIAN HOMELAND AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN THE WEST. THEY PRAY FOR EXIT VISAS FROM THE SOVIET UNION, BUT THEIR PRAYERS HAVE GONE UNANSWERED. 'WE WILL STAY HERE UNTIL WE DIE, IF NECESSARY' ONE OF THE PENTECOSTALS, AVGUSTA VASHCHENKO, PROMISED LAST WEEK.

27. "THE SOVIET UNION HAS TO CONTEND WITH A WIDE VARIETY OF DISSIDENTS. HUMAN-RIGHTS ADVOCATES GET MOST OF THE ATTENTION, AND LAST WEEK ONE OF THEM, ALEXANDER PODRABINEK, 24, WAS SENTENCED TO FIVE YEARS OF BANISHMENT TO SIBERIA FOR WRITING A BOOK THAT ACCUSED THE KREMLIN OF INCARCERATING DISSENTERS IN PSYCHIATRIC INSTITUTIONS. BUT A NUMBER OF RELIGIOUS AND ETHNIC GROUPS ALSO PROTEST THEIR TREATMENT BY SOVIET AUTHORITIES. THE U.S. ABRUPTLY BECAME INVOLVED IN THE RELIGIOUS

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DISSENT MOVEMENT LAST JUNE, WHEN EIGHT PENTECOSTALS BURST PAST A SOVIET SOLDIER GUARDING THE EMBASSY'S MAIN ENTRANCE. ALL BUT ONE OF THEM- A 17-YEAR-OLD BOY WHO WAS CAPTURED- MADE IT INSIDE AND HAVE REFUSED TO BUDGE EVER SINCE.

28. "WORRY: THE PENTECOSTALS-FIVE MEMBERS OF THE VASHCHENKO FAMILY

PLUS ANOTHER WOMAN AND HER TEEN-AGE SON-BELONG TO A FUNDAMENTALIST SECT FOUNDED IN ODESSA IN 1918 BY AN AMERICAN MISSIONARY. ITS 200,000 MEMBERS BELIEVE THEY HAVE BEEN TOUCHED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND THEY SOMETIMES SPEAK IN INCOMPREHENSIBLE 'TONGUES.' CONSTANTLY HARASSED BY SOVIET OFFICIALS, THEY RISK FINES OR PRISON SENTENCES OF AS LONG AS FIVE YEARS JUST FOR HOLDING THEIR SERVICES.

29. "THE EMBASSY HAS MADE THE LEAST POSSIBLE FUSS OVER ITS UNINVITED HOUSE GUESTS. 'THERE IS SOME WORRY THAT AS WORD GETS AROUND, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT EMBASSIES HERE AND IN EASTERN EUROPE WILL BE DELUGED WITH SQUATTERS,' EXPLAINED A U.S. OFFICIAL. 'IT IS NOT A COMFORTABLE PROSPECT.' INDEED, AN ARMENIAN WOMAN, ELISA OVSPYAN, 34, HAS JOINED THE COMMUNITY IN THE LOBBY WITH HER TWO YOUNG SONS-TEARFULLY VOWING TO STAY UNTIL SHE GETS PERMISSION TO JOIN HER 80-YEAR-OLD MOTHER IN LOS ANGELES.

30. "THE SQUATTERS BATHE IN THE LOBBY WASHROOM, AND EMBASSY VOLUNTEERS TAKE TURNS SERVING THEM SIMPLE FOOD-BORSCHT OR PEACHES AND BREAD. U.S. OFFICIALS CANNOT DRIVE THE SQUATTERS AWAY. INSTEAD, THEY HAVE SOUGHT SOVIET ASSURANCES THAT THE SQUATTERS WILL NOT BE PROSECUTED IF THEY LEAVE THE EMBASSY VOLUNTARILY. BUT THE KREMLIN IS MAKING NO PROMISES, AND THE DIPLOMATIC STALEMATE COULD GO ON INDEFINITELY. CHRISTOPHER

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